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INITIAL REPORT

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SELECT SENATE COMMITTEE

to study

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.**

**(under the provisions of Senate,
No. 1845 of 1995 and continued by
Senate, No. 2216 of 1996)**

March 8, 1996

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**INITIAL REPORT OF THE SELECT SENATE
COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE CONTRIBUTION
OF WOMEN TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE COMMONWEALTH.**

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

We, the undersigned members of the Select Senate Committee To Study The Contribution of Women To The Government Of The Commonwealth, have begun the study of the contribution of women to the government of the Commonwealth. We hereby file this initial report containing the results to date of our study and a description of our future activities.

Senator Robert D. Wetmore, *Chairman*

Senator Frederick E. Berry

Senator David P. Magnani

Senator Therese Murray

Senator Marc R. Pacheco

Senator Marian Walsh

I. Background

On April 13, 1995, the Senate adopted an Order (Senate 1845), proposed by Senator Robert D. Wetmore, establishing a Select Committee of the Senate to study the contribution of women to the government of the Commonwealth and to commemorate that contribution in an area of the State House under the jurisdiction of the Senate President. The Committee was charged with the duty of choosing “a woman, who through her actions, has made a major contribution to the government of our commonwealth or who, through her actions, has represented a group of women who made such a contribution”. Senator Wetmore was prompted to propose the order by the lack of recognition of such contribution within the Senate specifically and within the State House generally. A copy of the Order is attached as Appendix A.

Appointed to serve on the Committee were Senator Robert D. Wetmore, Chairman, Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin District; Senator Frederick E. Berry, Second Essex District; Senator David P. Magnani, Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester District; Senator Therese Murray, Plymouth and Barnstable District; Senator Marc R. Pacheco, First Plymouth and Bristol District; and Senator Marian Walsh, Norfolk and Suffolk District. Ruth Flaherty of Senator Wetmore’s office served as main staff to the Committee and authored this report.

II. Activities of the Select Committee

A. Selection of Experts

The Committee determined that in order to carry out its work in a way which would result in an important step being taken toward acknowledging women’s role in the history of the Commonwealth and its government, it must enlist the skill and knowledge of experts. As a result, a number of men and women in academia and other fields were contacted by the Committee and asked to lend their time and expertise to the Committee. A number agreed to take part in the Committee’s work and have given invaluable assistance.

A list of these experts who have agreed to serve is attached as Appendix B.

B. Development of Criteria

The next task of the Committee was to develop a set of criteria by which to measure any nominee to be honored by the Committee and to choose the final honoree. A copy of these criteria is attached as Appendix C. The assistance of the experts was very helpful in developing these criteria. The criteria were approved by the Committee and the experts at the first formal meeting of the Committee, held on October 24, 1995.

C. Solicitation and Selection of Nominees

After the approval of the proposed criteria at the October 24, 1995, meeting the Committee began its solicitation of nominees. It was decided that nominations must be made by November 22, 1995. The experts agreed to submit names of women whom they thought to be good candidates and to prepare justification for their choices showing how each nominee would fit the Committee's criteria. Nominations were also received from outside the panel of experts. A number of nominees, while extremely worthy of recognition, were found not to come within the criteria and thus were struck from the final list of those to be considered as nominees. The final list of nominees is attached as Appendix D.

D. Selection of Honorees

During this process it became apparent that the selection of only one woman to be honored was neither wise nor prudent. Many experts and members of the Committee felt that the choice of only one woman would be merely a token and not a true representation of women's contribution. As a result, at the December 11, 1995, meeting of the Committee the experts who were present and those who were unable to attend the meeting but who expressed their preference by mail or telephone chose six women whom they felt should be honored and who broadly represented areas in which women have been active and have made a contribution to the government of the Commonwealth. The six women chosen were Lucy Stone, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Dorethea Dix, Florence Hope Luscomb, Mary Kenney O'Sullivan and Sarah Parker Remond. These choices were submitted to the Committee.

E. Selection of Method of Honoring Nominees

Throughout this process, the Committee and the experts have actively discussed the appropriate way (or ways) in which the

honorees should be commemorated. A number of options were discussed and a number of concerns also emerged from the discussions. Some of the experts expressed concern that the women to be honored must not take on an anonymous character and that they not become merely “representative” women but rather that they maintain their individuality so that their accomplishments could be celebrated.

As part of the process of determining the optimum way of commemorating the women a tour was taken of the State House prior to the December 11, 1995, meeting. The tour gave those experts who took it the opportunity to view the current representations of illustrious Massachusetts citizens and the public areas appropriate for commemorating the women chosen to be honored. An informal survey of possible sites was also conducted by one of the Committee’s experts, Carol Hardy-Fanta of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The results of her survey are attached as Appendix E.

In addition to an artistic representation or representations of the honorees, it was agreed by the Committee and the experts that a publication which would honor all of the women on the list of nominees should be produced. However, the sense of the group was that that could not be the first priority. Rather, the first priority should be an artistic portrayal or portrayals in the State House. A brochure explaining the representation(s) of women in the State House should be produced and distributed free of charge to State House visitors. In addition, discussion was had of the development of a “web page” which would make the pamphlet and artwork available on the Internet. In order to further these goals the group met with David Tibaldi of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities to discuss possible funding sources. It was also determined that the House of Representatives should be involved with the Committee’s Work, and Chairman Wetmore met with Speaker Charles Flaherty to discuss that involvement.

III. Further Activities and Recommendations

After several months of meetings and working with the experts and other interested members of the public, it is apparent to the Select Committee that its work has just begun. The task of choosing the appropriate way to commemorate the honorees and seeing the task to completion lies before the Committee. In order to carry out its purpose the Committee will be enlisting the involvement of the House of

Representatives, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and other interested groups. Within the State House, the Select Committee also foresees involvement with the Art Commission and the Senate Arts Committee. At the January 22, 1996, meeting it was decided that the Committee should seek to develop a formal relationship with the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. As a result Senator Wetmore met with both groups, who agreed to submit a proposal to the Committee for a review of the State House as the site of an art project proposed by the Committee, as well as delineating a range of art projects possible within the State House.

In order to have the opportunity to complete its work, the Select Committee has filed an order to extend the life of the Committee. That order, Senate 2216, was approved by the Senate on February 26, 1996, extending the life of the Committee until December 31, 1996. A copy of the order is attached as Appendix F. In addition, the Committee will consider requesting that funds be made available to enable the study mentioned above to be made of the most auspicious way and place in which to acknowledge the women chosen to be honored.

IV. Conclusion

The Committee recognizes the great contribution to its work which has been made by the experts who agreed to assist it. It also is very much aware of the fact that any steps which it takes to honor and commemorate the chosen women who made contributions to the government of the Commonwealth are very late in coming and are very small compared to that contribution. However, the Committee also is convinced that this recognition is an important step which should be taken toward the correction of the injustice of excluding women from our state's history.

APPENDIX A

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Five.

Ordered, That a select committee of the Senate is hereby established for the purpose of studying the contribution of women to the government of our commonwealth and commemorating that contribution in an area of the State House under the jurisdiction of the Senate President. The select committee shall choose, if necessary by majority vote, one woman who, through her actions, has made a major contribution to the government of our commonwealth or who, by her actions, has represented a group of women who made such a contribution. Said select committee shall consist of seven members of the Senate, to be appointed by the President thereof. Said select committee shall request the assistance of individuals and organizations they deem appropriate for expert consultation and advice and any other contributions that may be of significant nature. The select committee shall, after selecting the individual to be honored, designate the proper method of portraiture, whether by painting or other means of representation.

Said select committee may accept and spend any gifts or donations from any source as may be helpful to the completion of the commemoration of the contribution of women to the government of the commonwealth, as well as any funds appropriated therefor.

Said select committee may report from time to time but shall make its final report by filing the same with the Clerk of the Senate on or before March 8, 1996.

APPENDIX B

Martin Blatt, Ph.D.
National Park Service
Lowell National Historical Park
169 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852-1796

Sylvia G. Buck, Director
Warren Public Library
934 Main Street
Warren, MA 01083

Dr. Fran Burke
Suffolk University
8 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Ms. Lisa Connelly Cook
10 Raymond Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Dr. Adelaide M. Cromwell
African American Studies Center
Boston University
138 Mountfort Street
Brookline, MA 02146

Ms. Kathleen Currul
17 Regan Road
Milford, MA 01757

Professor Sarah Deutsch
Department of History
Clark University
950 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610

Professor Angela Dorenkamp
Department of English
Assumption College
500 Salisbury Street
Worcester, MA 01615-0005

Ms. Barbara Clark Elam
110 Gaslight Drive
South Weymouth, MA 02190

Attorney Priscilla Geigis
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
100 Cambridge Street - Room 1901
Boston, MA 02202

Ms. Carol Geyer
37 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Ms. Carol Hardy-Fanta
Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy
McCormack Institute
University of Massachusetts - Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Ms. Charlotte Harris
26 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108

Bruce Laurie, Chair
Department of History
Herter Hall
Box 33930
Amherst, MA 01003-3930

Dr. Marlowe Miller
Department of English
University of Massachusetts - Lowell
One University Avenue
Lowell, MA 01854

Professor Betty L. Mitchell
Department of History
University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
North Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300

Eva Moseley, Curator of Manuscripts
Schlesinger Library
10 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Professor Kathy Peiss
Department of History
Herter Hall
University of Massachusetts - Amherst
P.O. Box 33930
Amherst, MA 01003-3930

Professor Susan Reverby
238 Pearl Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Ms. Shelley A. Saunders
150 Bunkerhill Street, 1-B
Charlestown, MA 02129

Ms. Mary Smoyer
22 Holbrook Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Ms. Elaine Taber
7 Jamaica Place
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Ms. Maeve Vellely
Office of Senator Robert Durand
Room 109-C
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Ms. Sylvia Watts McKinney
Afro-American History Museum
Abiel Smith School
46 Joy Street
Boston, MA 02114

Professor Polly Welts Kaufman
Box 2619
Oak Ledge Road
Brunswick, ME 04011

Ms. Susan Wilson
33 Richdale Street
Cambridge, MA 02140

APPENDIX C

Selection Criteria for Honoree of the Select Senate
Committee to Study the Contribution of Women to
the Government of Massachusetts

I. The legislation which establishes the Committee states the Committee's purpose as "studying the contribution of women to the government of the commonwealth" and selecting a "woman who through her actions has made a major contribution to the government of our commonwealth or who by her actions has represented a group of women who made such a contribution". Two terms in this charge to the Committee need definition "government" and "major contribution".

A. Government

Government in this context is to be defined broadly to include not only governmental bodies such as the executive, legislature and agencies, but also the influencing of government to change policies and assumptions.

B. Major Contribution

A major contribution is defined as:

1. Action which had a lasting impact on the government of the Commonwealth;
2. Action which changed government's basic assumptions about women in society or caused changes in procedures which affected women in their dealings with government;
3. Action which eliminated or lowered barriers created by the Commonwealth and opened doors for other women or other citizens of the Commonwealth;
4. Action which resulted in important legislative or regulatory change, such as changes in voting rights, labor laws and the like; or
5. Action which set an example which led to governmental change.

II. The candidate need not have held office or position whether elective or non-elective.

III. The candidate had a lasting commitment to improving the lot of women.

APPENDIX D

NOMINATIONS — REVISED LIST

1. Sarah G. Bagley — Marlowe Miller, Marty Blatt
2. Lydia Maria (Francis) Child — Eva Moseley
3. Dr. Susan Dimock — Susan Wilson
4. Dorothea Lynde Dix — Marlowe Miller, Mary Blewett,
Jane Madden
5. Elizabeth Glendower Evans — Marty Blatt
6. Mary Donovan Hapgood — Marty Blatt
7. Florence Hope Luscomb — Eva Moseley
8. Mary Eliza Mahoney — Susan Wilson
9. Rose Finkelstein Norwood — Marty Blatt
10. Mary Kenney O'Sullivan — Marty Blatt, Kathy Peiss
11. Julia O'Connor Parker — Marty Blatt, Susan Wilson
12. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin — Sylvia Watts McKinney, Polly
Welts Kaufman, Adelaide Cromwell, Barbara Clark Elam
13. Lotte E. Scharfman — Jane Madden
14. Pauline (Agassiz) Shaw — Eva Moseley
15. Lucy Stone — Lisa Connelly Cook, Polly Welts Kaufman,
Barbara Clark Elam
16. Mary Gordon Thompson — Marty Blatt
17. Sarah Parker Remond — Bruce Laurie
18. Mary Morton Kehew — Sarah Deutsch
19. Maud Wood Park — Eva Moseley
20. Clementina Poto Langone — Carol Geyer
21. Mary Newman — Suggested by a Number of Those at Meeting
22. Mary Lyon — Eva Moseley
23. Marie Zakrzewska (and/or Harriet Kezia Hunt) — Eva Moseley
24. Julia Ward Howe — Eva Moseley
25. Abby Kelley Foster — Lisa Connelly Cook, Sarah Deutsch

APPENDIX E

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS — BOSTON
100 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125-3393

Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

(617) 964-0347

January 23, 1996

Senator Robert D. Wetmore
Room 312-H
Massachusetts Senate
State House
Boston, MA 02133-1053

Dear Senator Wetmore:

Let me say first that it has been a great pleasure to be part of your Senate Committee to Study the Contribution of Women to the Government of the Commonwealth. I admire your initiative in this regard and have found the meetings to be informative and of great value. I am writing because I promised Ruth Flaherty that I would put together a packet of the results of our survey of existing representations of men and women in the State House. It seemed important to assemble the facts so that when funding is sought to redress the current imbalance of women and men in the State House portraits, statues, etc., you and the committee can demonstrate this imbalance in an authoritative manner.

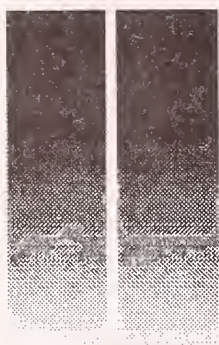
This first chart is titled *Women in the State House: A Question of Visibility*. This lists the (dis)proportion of men and women as represented at the State House. The second chart, which is titled, *Women in the State House: Possible Solutions* reflects the results of our search for available sites for portraits, busts, murals, etc. The third chart provides the pros and cons of the different sites. While this letter and the charts represent my personal calculations and suggestions, I believe they have been informed by the discussions the committee has held as

a group. We do seem to have reached a consensus that a mural that acknowledges women as a group is insufficient as would be one individual portrait or bust. And, while I agree with you that a display where the public can see the women represented is important, we should not lose sight of the importance of women being visible in areas of greatest power: the Senate Chamber and the House Chamber as well.

Again, thank you for including me with this remarkable group of individuals and for the opportunity to contribute in some way to the increased recognition of women in the Commonwealth.

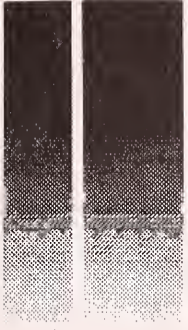
Sincerely yours,

Carol Hardy-Fanta, Ph.D.



Women in the State House: A Question of Visibility

- ✓ Out of 67 portraits of individuals, there are NO women
- ✓ Out of 19 busts, there are NO women
- ✓ Out of 6 statues, there is only one with a woman portrayed. She is an anonymous nurse and shares the statue with a soldier
- ✓ Out of 12 plaques, there are NO women
- ✓ Out of 16 murals, there are only two with women at the forefront. However, in one, she is clearly an allegorical figure; in the other, they are archetypes: "war mothers."
- ✓ All the busts in the Senate Chamber are men
- ✓ None of the "milestones" murals in the House Chamber portrays the contribution of Massachusetts women to the suffrage and abolition movements



Women in the State House: Possible Solutions

The following sites have been identified as offering public prominence and/or value as symbols of power

- ✓ Grand Staircase: Two portraits on either side of stained-glass window at stair landing
- ✓ Grand Staircase: Bust in empty alcove facing staircase
- ✓ Doric Hall: Plaque in available space
- ✓ Doric Hall: Bust opposite bust of Lodge (outside Doric Hall)
- ✓ Senate Chamber: Busts in eight empty alcoves
- ✓ Senate Reading Room: Portrait above flag
- ✓ House Chamber: Two murals -- Women's contribution to suffrage and abolitionist movements

Women in State House: Pros & Cons of Sites

We are in substantial agreement that we need at least one individual portrait, a bust and/or statue and at least one mural, as well as the publication. There are benefits to having some of these be in sites accessible to the public for maximum exposure but it is important to have some evidence of women's contribution to the Commonwealth in areas of actual and symbolic power as well.

Grand Staircase: Maximum public exposure

Doric Hall: High public exposure

Nurses Hall: There is actually room for a large statue across from the Nurse statue but it would be unfortunate to have both statues of women relegated to one room

Senate Chamber & Reading Room: Important sites of power; less public exposure
House Chamber:

APPENDIX F

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Six.

Ordered, That the select committee of the Senate established (under the provisions of Senate Order, No. 1845 of nineteen hundred and ninety-five) is hereby continued until December thirty-first, nineteen hundred and ninety-six.

